

23 April 1963

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Current Situation in Cuba

I. The Status of Soviet Forces in Cuba

A. Since mid-February, about 4,700 Soviet personnel have been observed leaving Cuba on Soviet passenger ships; most of these appeared to be military personnel.

1. Some Soviet personnel have arrived in Cuba during this period, but we have no acceptable evidence that more than a few hundred at most have arrived to replace those being withdrawn.

2. Some small units may have been withdrawn in their entirety, while others may merely have been thinned out. Until entire units depart or equipment is withdrawn, however, it will be difficult to determine with any degree of certainty the specific units from which the embarked passengers may have been withdrawn.

3. Before the recent withdrawals began, we estimated, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] that at least 17,500

troops would be needed to staff Soviet installations and man Soviet equipment in Cuba.

4. In view of the possibility that some replacement personnel may have arrived, and of the fact that our original estimate was not based on a head count, it is not possible to arrive at a firm estimate of the present strength of Soviet military forces in Cuba by a process of simple subtraction of the number we believe have been withdrawn.

B. There is no indication that the Soviets have shipped out any significant quantities of military equipment since the strategic missiles and jet bombers were removed last fall. Soviet equipment still under Soviet control in Cuba includes:

1. Twenty-four operational SAM sites; about 500 surface-to-air missiles.
 - a. Some sites have been relocated, but the number of sites remains the same.
(BAHIA HONDA/MAJANA briefing boards)

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b. In addition, the probable SAM training site at Managua was activated recently (10-11 April) with equipment apparently coming from the former SAM site at Havana.

2. Four operational coastal defense cruise-missile sites, one of which appears to be a training site; however, enough cruise-missiles are on hand to establish up to 15 more sites.

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3. Forty-two MIG 21 jet fighters, equipped with air-to-air missiles. (The Cubans have at least 50 MIG-15/17s and 12 MIG-19s.)

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4. The four Soviet armored groups have some 140 medium tanks, 16 amphibious tanks, about 25 FROG tactical rockets, some 30 armored scout cars equipped with wire-guided anti-tank rockets, as well as assault guns, mortars, and infantry rocket launchers.

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5. Twelve KOMAR guided missile patrol boats.

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C. Since mid-1960, the USSR has delivered substantial quantities of conventional weapons ranging from small arms to heavy tanks to the Cuban armed forces, and Cuban units have been training in the use of these weapons. While there has been a gradual accumulation of evidence that Cubans are being trained to take over some of the more sophisticated Soviet equipment, none of it appears to have been removed from Soviet control to date.

II. The Internal Situation in Cuba

- A. The Cuban economy continues to deteriorate.
1. Consumer goods rationing, started a year ago, has not assured equitable distribution or adequate supplies.
 - a. This is a major irritant among the public, but the people are not starving. It also enables a tight security control over all individuals by ration cards.
 2. Cuba is dependent on the Communist bloc for about 80 per cent of its imports, including all petroleum and an increasing proportion of consumer goods.

3. Even with continuing major economic aid from the bloc, the prospects for significant improvement are dim.
 - a. Cuba's sugar crop--the mainstay of the economy--this year will be even less than last year's poor crop. Most observers are predicting between 3.5 and 4 million tons. The crop last year was 4.8 million tons.
 - b. Although world sugar prices are at a 40-year high (7.7¢ per pound compared with about 2.5¢ a year ago), Cuba will not benefit proportionately since a good portion of the crop will go to the bloc as barter for Cuba's imports.
4. Unless the bloc is willing to invest even more heavily in Cuba, many of the grandiose development plans worked out earlier in the Cuban-Soviet partnership will have to be deferred in order simply to keep the country afloat.

B. Politically, the Castro regime appears to be speeding up the organization of its party machine, to be known as the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS) and scheduled

for formal birth some time this year.

1. Castro and other leaders have made a number of speeches lately to arouse enthusiasm and explain the new structure, which the leaders say will not wholly follow Soviet or Chinese models.
 - a. The Cuban leaders evidently are trying to organize the new party so that it cannot fall under the influence of any previously existing organization, such as the pre-Castro Communist party.
 - b. There is little question, however, but that Communists will strongly influence the party, although they must be less heavy-handed than Anibal Escalante, the veteran Communist whom Castro purged and exiled a year ago for trying to take over the machinery.
- C. There has been an increase since early this year of resistance activity by small and scattered bands of anti-Castro guerrillas.
 1. Most of the guerrilla raids have occurred in the mountains of south-central Cuba, but recently they have spread to other areas.

2. The Cuban army has been engaged in another of its periodic attempts to round up and destroy these bands; it has not succeeded in more than two years of such efforts.
3. This resistance activity is still more of a harassment than a threat to the regime; Castro's internal security network precludes resistance except by small, largely isolated groups.

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Approved For Release 2003/08/19 : CIA-RDP79T00429A001300030017-5

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